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Breaching EIA case: Mention fixed for Aug 8

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Sessions Court today fixed Aug 8 for the mention of the case involving developer Projek Ikatan Rapi Sdn Bhd charged with three counts of breaching conditions attached to its Environmental Impact Assessment report.

Judge Hue Siew Kheng fixed the date after an application from the developer's counsel Muhammad Shafee Abdullah when the case came up for mention.

Muhammad Shafee, who applied for another mention date, told the court that there was a possibility that the case would not have to go to trial.

On June 6, Projek Ikatan Rapi, the Ukay Perdana housing project developer, was charged with failing to provide sufficient proof that three conditions attached to the report, concerning prescribed activities, were being complied with at its project site located at Lot 13431, Hulu Klang about 12 noon on Jan 20.

The developer, represented by its director Suhaimy Husin, had pleaded not guilty.

The conditions involved the project site's topography, felling of trees, treating exposed slopes, silt traps and the suspended solid level.

Owned by Capital Advance Consolidated Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Larut Consolidated Bhd, Ikatan Rapi was charged under section 34A(7) of the Environmental Quality Act 1974 (Amendment 1996) which carries a maximum fine of RM100,000 or imprisonment of up to five years or both.

Muhammad Shafee was assisted by Cheong Wee Wong while Khiruddin Mohd Idris, from the Selangor Department of Environment prosecuted.

Ikatan Rapi came under fire for indiscriminate felling of trees and levelling of land on a 82.8ha piece of land, which is part of 138ha earmarked for the project near Bukit Antarabangsa.

The environment degradation at the project site was highlighted after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad spotted a bare hill (project site) from a helicopter.

The Cabinet subsequently directed the Housing and Local Government Ministry to investigate the land-clearing works while the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council issued a stop-work order to the developer.

It was then directed to take remedial measures.

On April 3, Ikatan Rapi pledged to plant some 12,000 trees at the site within six months. It was part of the remedial measures proposed to the State Government and the council.

Ikatan Rapi also proposed to give the Selangor Government a bank guarantee of RM5 million to be forfeited if it failed to meet the six-month target.

The stop-work order was lifted recently with the condition that the developer include 300 low-cost houses in the scheme.

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